



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: January 17, 2023
RE: **November & December 2022 Staff SOC Report**

October Client Complaints and Investigations

There were seven formal complaints submitted through the SMC in November and December 2022.

Note: Frequently the SMC staff receive tentative complaints that the complainant never follows up on. That is, they do not provide minimally necessary details, or they do not approve our draft of a complaint that they have not themselves completed in writing. These are not included in this report. Narratives provide an overview of the types of complaints forwarded to each site. Not all sites have had a chance to respond to the complaints. Complaints may have already been investigated to the satisfaction of the site or its contracting agency; however, the Committee must allow for each complainant to review the responses and the complainant determines whether s/he is satisfied. If the complainant is not satisfied, the Committee will investigate the allegations listed in the complaint.

A Woman's Place

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 11/10/2022

Response received: 11/21/2022

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 2:** Provide services in an environment that is safe and free of physical violence.
- **Standard 13:** Make the shelter available for sleeping at least eight hours per night...
- **Standard 31:** Training...cultural humility...

Complaint #1 (SOC #1, SOC #31):

- Shelter staff curse, discriminate against some residents and discuss private health information in front of residents.
- The shelter denies these allegations. If they ignore her attempts to engage in an argument, she will sit in the front area and call government offices or 911, making whatever (false) complaints it takes to trigger a response. All the AWP shelter team has attended the Shelter Grievance Training. The HSH shelter policies are posted throughout the shelter for clients and staff alike.

Complaint #2 (SOC #1):

- The director of women's services followed the client into the restroom and told the client "You can't tell me to stop talking to you. I am the director." She minimized the client's past trauma.
- The shelter responded that they maintain a safe and violence-free environment. Staff never follow guests into the restroom. The client refuses to stop yelling. Attempts at de-escalation are to no avail. The client believes she controls her bed and the surrounding areas. This causes strife with other participants. She threatens to get staff fired, and everyone inevitably became afraid to interact with her.

Complaint #3 (SOC #1):

- Client stated that she has been discriminated against denied access to complaint forms. In addition, complaint has stated that staff disclose Person Protective Information (PPI) to other guest and staff that don't need to know.
- The shelter denies these allegations. The director has received complaints from the client, though no complaints for discrimination have been received, except for an assertion that they "favor trans women." But the client has not given any example of an injustice that arose due to discrimination. If staff laugh with each other the client assumes it is about her. The guest sees everything through a lens that leads her to misinterpret even the most benign actions that staff and other guests take.

Complaint #4 (SOC #2):

- Shelter director of women's services denied access to law enforcement, the director took it upon herself to tell law enforcement that they were not needed. Client was denied a city service that she called because she felt her safety was being threatened.
- The guest has called the police and made false reports more than once. Law enforcement has in some cases not responded. In others the officer has spoken with the client and apparently determined that her allegations were not credible.

Complaint #5 (SOC #13):

- Noise is carelessly or purposely made in the middle of the night or early morning on a regular basis, which leads to sleep deprivation among clients, including the complainant. Staff does not adequately enforce quiet time.
- Guests are allowed to rest any time of the day. We have addressed noisy guests loudly; however, they cannot disclose actions against other guests. As a congregate setting complete silence cannot be guaranteed; however, staff knows that Swing and Graveyard must be as quiet as possible. Disturbances during sleeping hours are addressed. They remind staff and clients to mindful of their neighbors.

ECS Sanctuary

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/07/2022

Response received: 12/13/2022

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe and free of physical violence including training to shelter staff regarding de-escalation techniques.)
- **Standard 13:** (Make shelter facility available for sleeping at least 8 hours per night.)

Complaint #1 (SOC # 1):

- The complainant attempted to speak with the site management about feeling harassed by other clients and was essentially denied the opportunity. The client felt that she was disrespected and not treated with dignity.
- The shelter states that the client did not follow protocol, even forcing herself into a supervisor's office rather than approaching the assigned floor coordinator. Staff makes every effort to treat guests with respect and dignity.

Complaint #2 (SOCs # 2):

- Complainant asserts that the police were called on her for no reason and is feeling harassed and discriminated against by staff who do not hear her side. The complainant feels she is being antagonized by other guests with support from staff.
- Residents have the right to call the police. The complainant continues to spray Lysol, ignoring a prohibition on this and complaints from other guests. Arguments between guests are often instigated by this client. In fact, she herself creates most of the conflict in her unit.

Complaint #3 (SOCs # 2):

- The complainant states she was putting her clothes in the dryer when she was accosted by another guest. A supervisor who was present did not intervene. The client felt unprotected.
- The complainant appeared to be the aggressor in the situation she purports to be the victim of. She instigated an argument, the other party did not immediately acquiesce to her wishes, and she got very upset. This reverse interpretation of events is a pattern with her.

Complaint #4 (SOC # 13):

- The complainant states that bed #22 was causing disturbance on the floor during quiet hours. The male supervisor comes to floor without announcing his presence just looking, as bed #22 slams open bathroom door nothing is said to her by supervisor she is allowed to yell in the middle of the night and continue to cause disturbance that interrupts the dorms sleeping.
- No staffer was named, which complicates the assessment of this complaint. However, all residents are required with no exception to adhere to quiet time policy when the lights are out at night. All male staff announce themselves before walking into the women's floor.

Not Satisfied – The complainant was not satisfied with the site's response and has requested an investigation into the complaint. The investigation is currently pending.

MSC-South

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/09/2022

Response received: 12/13/2022

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 2:** Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe and free of physical violence including training to shelter staff regarding de-escalation techniques.)
- **Standard 8:** Provide services in compliance with the ADA...)
- **Standard 25:** Require all staff to wear a badge...)
- **Standard 31:** Training... including sensitivity regarding homelessness and people with disabilities...

Complaint #1 (SOCs # 1, #25):

- The complainant, who is disabled, was asked at 8:25 AM to depart the kitchen, even though the posted breakfast period ends at 9:00 AM, by a shelter employee not wearing a name badge. The staffer was persistent, rude, aggressive and disrespectful.
- The shelter staffer was new and had not yet received a badge. He says he did not disrespect or threaten any guest and that he would never do so, knowing they may already be in distress. He did start cleaning the tables that no other guests were eating at and sweeping, which he was instructed to do. He was reminded of the importance of treating everyone with respect.

Complaint #2 (SOCs #2, #8, #31):

- When the Complainant stated the kitchen was not closed, the tall imposing employee entered his personal space, and said, “You need to hurry your old, crippled ass up and get the [f-word] out.” The Complainant felt unsafe. There was no significant response by management when he complained. This employee needs training in sensitivity towards those with disabilities.
- The kitchen staffer stated he did not see the alleged engagement, except that the client did get upset staff was sweeping by him. Management met with the client. He did not know the names of guest witnesses. They reassured him insofar as they could, e.g., that they do not tolerate an unsafe environment. St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) expressed a commitment to offering ongoing professional development to all staff including de-escalation training, Standards of care, and the Shelter Training Manual.

Complaint #3 (SOC #2):

- The Complainant, feeling threatened, raised his voice to make sure what was going on was seen by others. A security guard came over and, without assessing the situation, said if he didn't lower his voice, he would be put out of the shelter. The security guard did not attempt to de-escalate the situation; rather he threatened to immediately put the (disabled) Complainant out of the facility. The guard refused to go and get a supervisor.
- MSC-South kitchen staff will in the future wait until breakfast is complete to start the cleaning up. SVDP will continue to work on improving customer service so that everyone's experience in accessing services is one of fairness and everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

MSC-South

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/13/2022

Response received: 12/20/2022

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 31:** Training...cultural humility...

Complaint #1 (SOC #1):

- A supervisor came to floor with an intake. He told the complainant she was in the wrong bed. The bed numbers had been changed by the shelter a few weeks prior. The supervisor continually interrupted complainant and accused the complainant of being disruptive. The complainant felt disrespected and not treated with dignity.
-

Complaint #2 (SOC #31)

- The complainant was very stressed by this interaction requested a mental health advocate. The supervisor told the complainant there were none on duty. The client was moving her belongings but felt anxiety and fear of being “kicked out” when a staffer was told to call security. The supervisor called her “crazy.” This interaction indicates that there is a need for retraining.
-

Next Door

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/14/2022

Response received: 12/18/2022

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 30:** ...comply with Cal-OSHA precautions...

Complaint #1 (SOC #1):

- The client/complainant states that during his time at the shelter several derogatory comments and insults were made by staff. When the client was DOS'd he was referred to as a “faggot.” Staffers laughed, showing no compassion or professionalism. The client observed a pattern of staff violating the laws against discrimination against “whites, gays, and transgenders,” e.g., they are written up for not having their masks on all the way, while nearby, sitting in the middle of their bed, another guest may be openly “shooting fentanyl” and nothing is said.
- Five Keys staff are diversified. Next Door staff members who hear a homophobic comment follow the HSH Non-Immediate Denial of Service rule #2H. There had been no complaints prior to this one of any of the concerns mentioned. All guests accountable to the HSH rules. If a guest is seen “shooting fentanyl,” they would be written up per rule #2C.

Complaint #2 (SOC #1):

- Staff misappropriate clients' property. Guests have boxes to house valuables; however, when asked to see their box, guests are often denied. When they let the complainant see his box after a long wait, things were missing, including his watch. When the client questioned the ambassador about this, she shoved the box at him and said disrespectfully, "you can see what's in there, can't you?" When the complainant asked to speak with management, a denial of service was issued. The client and his belongings were "thrown into the street."
- Next Door does not hold valuables such as jewelry or personal documents. The guests are given combination locks so that all their valuables are held in the drawer under their bed. They do have 24/7 boxes for guests to store their weapons and lighters. On the day of the DOS the on-duty Supervisor, Assistant Director, and the Director were all present. The client was asked if he would like Next Door to hold his items. He said he would never come back and wanted his items at that time. All of his items were given to him. He began to throw his belongings into the street and at people outside the building. In fact, a staff member was injured.

Complaint #3 (SOC #30):

- The client has repeatedly observed staff not wearing their masks while in close proximity to and speaking with guests and other staff.
- Five Keys requires all staff to wear masks at all times while on property. If a staff member is seen by their superior not wearing a mask the staff member is held accountable.

Complaint #4 (Other):

- The client was also denied medical assistance for a cut, infected finger. He injured himself at work and the wound was aggravated accidentally while in residence at Next Door. He states that the nursing supervisor declined to help him because it is a workers' compensation injury. This issue will be taken up with the DPH nursing manager separately.
- DPH staff indicated that if anyone came to the clinic with a cut, infected finger they would absolutely be treated even if it was a work-related injury.

AWP Drop-In

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/27/2022

Response received: pending

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 3:** Provide liquid soap...and hire janitorial staff to clean shelters on a daily basis

Complaint #1 (SOC #1):

The client alleges that some staff refer to guests as "animals" and otherwise disrespect them. When inconvenient questions are asked or reasonable concerns expressed, guests are often responded to in a disrespectful manner, e.g., sticking their fingers in the client's face while telling them to mind their own business or otherwise instructing them. They make up some

rules as they go, e.g., change the time when lights are turned out for the night. The client sees this as disrespectful. Shelter rules should be clear (and ideally posted). This complaint was submitted anonymously for fear of retaliation.

Complaint #2 (SOCs 1 and 3)

The complainant states the soap dispensers in the bathrooms are not being replenished frequently enough. Leading up to her report, there was essentially no soap in most of the dispensers for a period of one week. Guests may have personal supplies of soap, but the wall-mounted and other common dispensers are frequently either empty or filled with water, shampoo, or something other than hand soap or body wash (that is, with not very effective substitutes).

Complaint #3 (SOC 3)

The janitor cleans too infrequently. The restrooms are often very dirty and smell terrible. It appears to the complainant that other clients try to get at residual soap by opening the dispensers and sticking their dirty hands in, leaving visible residue/dirt—possibly feces—inside.

ECS Sanctuary

Client #1,

Complaints submitted: 12/28/2022

Response received: 1/04/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...
- **Standard 9:** Nutrition...
- **Standard 17:** Provide notice as to when maintenance problems will be repaired.

Complaint #1 (SOC 1)

- The complainant states “male shelter supervisory floor staff” are consistently rude, abusive, and dismissive towards guests, especially the male homosexuals in the shelter. They exhibit “extreme homophobia.” Over his time at this location, he has seen staff repeatedly create physical drama with males they even perceive to be homosexual. For example, they hound and harass them and capriciously threaten to evict (DOS) them out of discriminatory animus, rather than for any true violation of the shelter’s rules.
- The complaint above is false and unsubstantiated. Sanctuary adheres to ECS and HSH policies that state no verbal harassment toward other participants, staff members, or volunteers, including but not limited to racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic language, or language that is offensive to a religious group, age group, or other protected class; or on-going use of personally derogatory or abusive language is condoned. On December 26th, during wellness check of the facility, the client had a pair of scissors. It was explained to him that guests are not allowed to have scissors or any sharp objects on their person or in the facility. He wasn’t happy about this and expressed his dissatisfaction. He was informed that if he did not comply

with the rules, he would jeopardize his placement at the facility. Management spoke with the client and he seemed to understand that the rules must be adhered to by all.

Complaint #2 (SOC 17)

- The client reports that there is little or no hot water available in the second-floor showers. The water is consistently very cold, to a degree that can reasonably be anticipated to be unhealthy for those with weakened immune systems or other susceptibility to disease. Sanctuary urgently needs to have its boiler and/or plumbing overhauled. [This or a closely related issue has been reported by other clients to the SMC, who stated that all three showers had to be “jammed” open in order for the hot water to flow in any one of the showers.]
- The Director and Site Manager met with the guest to address his concerns regarding inconsistent hot water. There has been an ongoing issue with the water temperature at the Sanctuary. This issue has been brought to the attention of the owner of the building owner and there is a plan in place to replace the boiler systems so that the water issue will be resolved. In the meantime, the facility manager increased the hot water temperature. Also, the guest reported that he has been offered shower privileges elsewhere. He is pleased with that arrangement, and this is no longer an issue. However, we will continue to monitor the project with the owner and will notify the guests accordingly.

Complaint #3 (SOC9)

- The client states that the food at Sanctuary is nutritionally deficient and “tastes horrible.” He has lost weight because of this. The food is “always either under-cooked (which is a Department of Health concern, obviously, because of food borne pathogens) or over-cooked -- thereby leading the food to taste horrible and forcing the residents to not eat it, or get sick and throw-up from eating it. If the food ... tastes so bad that nobody eats [it, this] defeats the whole purpose.”
- Sanctuary works with the registered dietician on menu development for Sanctuary residents. Meals are comprised of a minimum of 3 ounces protein, vegetables, additional salad, and multiple servings of whole grain/carbohydrates. New 2023 menu will soon be available to residents that include more diverse offerings.

September 2022 Client Complaints by Standard

Standard of Care	Number of complaints alleging violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity, including in the application of shelter policies...	4
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...	1
Standard 13: Make the shelter available for sleeping at least 8 hours per night...	1

Standard 30: Comply...with injury and illness Prevention Program...	1
Standard 31: Training...cultural humility...	3

Note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one Standard of Care

Total Client Complaints FY 2022-2023

Site	COVID capacity	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total (FY22-23)
Buena Vista Horace Mann	30 mats	0	0	0	0									0
Compass Family	21 families	0	0	0	0									0
Dolores	39 guests			0	0									0
Hamilton Family	69 families	0	1	0	0									1
Harbor House Family	29 families	0	0	0	0									0
MNRC	15 guests			0	0									
Lark Inn	34 beds	0	0	0	0									0
MSC South Shelter	168 beds	1	0	1	0									2
Next Door	248 beds	2	0	0	0									2
Providence Family	50 beds	0	0	0	0									0
Sanctuary (ECS)	124 beds	2	0	0	1									3
St. Joseph's Family	9 families	0	0	0	0									0
Total	Single adult: 574 beds/mats	5	1	1	1									8
	Family: 128 families and 80 beds/mats													

October 2022 Site Visit Infractions

The Committee completed 3 unannounced site visits in October 2022. Hamilton, Lark Inn, and Compass had no infractions. There were infractions noted. There were no issues that rose to the level of an infraction.

FY2022-2023 Unannounced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total
------	------	------	------	-------	-------	-------	------	------	------	------	------	------	-------

St. Joseph's Family													0
¹ New Sept ² New Oct													
Total	0	0	1	0	1								2

The Committee is required to make two announced site visits to each site each year to survey clients.

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Membership

There are currently two unfilled seats on the Shelter Monitoring Committee:

Board of Supervisors:

Seat 1 – Must be homeless or formerly homeless who is living or has lived with their child under age 18.

LHCB:

Seat 7 – Must be nominated by a service provider.

If you are interested in applying for a seat on the Committee, please contact Angie David at 415-255-3642 or email angella.david@sfdph.org for more information.

FY2022-2023 Upcoming Meeting Calendar

- January 18, 2023
- February 16, 2023
- March 15, 2023
- April 19, 2023
- May 17, 2023
- June 21, 2023